



Children's Skin Cancer  
Education & Prevention

# Sun Safety Back to School Guide for Parents



[www.ShadeFoundation.org](http://www.ShadeFoundation.org)

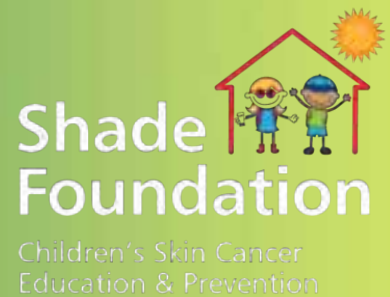


@preventmelanoma



[facebook.com/PreventingSkin  
Cancer](https://facebook.com/PreventingSkinCancer)

# Introduction



Across the country millions of children are not only returning to the school room, but to the playgrounds at recess, or to the practice fields.

You prepared them for school with new clothes, pencils, art supplies, backpacks and sneakers. But are they prepared to stay sun safe during outdoor Phys Ed classes, recesses or in soccer practice?

**The Shade Foundation is the nation's only organization focused on educating today's youth on preventing skin cancer.** Prepared for parents, this guide provides information to raise awareness on how to protect our children from the dangers of skin cancer while at school.

- **Skin Cancer Facts** understand what's at stake
- **Sun Safety Supplies** learn how to protect your kids
- **School Policy Checklist** what you need to know about your school's sun safety policy

For more information, please visit [www.shadefoundation.org](http://www.shadefoundation.org) or email [info@shadefoundation.org](mailto:info@shadefoundation.org).

# What's at Stake

## Facts About Skin Cancer



The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage your skin in as little as **15 minutes**.<sup>1</sup>

**One in five Americans** will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup>

Each year there are more new cases of skin cancer than the **combined** incidence breast, prostate, lung and colon cancer.<sup>3</sup>

**Five or more sunburns** before age 20 may increase melanoma risk by **80 percent**.<sup>4</sup>

On average, **one American dies from melanoma every hour**. In 2016, it is estimated that 10,130 deaths will be attributed to melanoma.<sup>5</sup>

1. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
2. [American Academy of Dermatology](#)
3. [Skin Cancer Foundation](#)
4. [American Association for Cancer Research](#)
5. [American Academy of Dermatology](#)

# Sun Safety Supplies

## What Your Child Need to Be Sun Safe

### Clothing

Loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and long pants made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection from the sun's UV rays. Darker colors can offer more protection than lighter colors.

### Sunglasses and Hats

Excessive exposure to UV radiation can burn the front of the eyes, similar to a sunburn on the skin.

Hats and collars prevent sunburn on the head and neck. Melanoma of the head and neck are twice as fatal than other parts of the body.

### Sunscreen

Using sunscreen is one of the easiest ways to prevent sunburn. It's easy to carry and apply when needed. Always apply at least 15 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours.

### UV Index App

The UV index provides a daily forecast of the expected risk of overexposure to the sun.



[Download to your phone.](#)

[www.epa.gov/enviro/uv-index-mobile-app](http://www.epa.gov/enviro/uv-index-mobile-app)

# Fashion That Protects

## Sun Safe Clothing

Physical barriers to UV radiation are among the best ways to prevent skin cancer. This is why clothing can be the one of the most effective lines of defense.

- **Long-sleeve** clothing, with tightly-woven fabrics offer the best protection because the fibers are closer together permitting less UV radiation to reach the skin.
- **Darker color** clothing typically provides more protection than lighter colors as dark colors absorb more UV radiation.



Source: [Skin Cancer Foundation](http://www.skincancer.org) (www.skincancer.org)

# Fashion That Protects

## Sun Safe Clothing

Loose fitting clothing allows the skin to breath and wicks sweat away from the skin. Tight-fitting garments will stretch and expose skin to UV rays.



**Wash new garments** made from cotton or cotton blends two or three times at least. This will cause the clothing to shrink, reducing the space between fibers and increasing UV protection.

In many schools, the use of sunscreen is limited. Investing in sun-safe clothing offers kids great protection from the sun, as well as side-stepping prohibitive sunscreen policies.

# Fashion That Protects

## Sun Safe Clothing

Your eyes and the soft skin around your eyes are susceptible to cancer as well.

Look for sunglasses that block 99 percent or 100 percent of all UV light. Some manufacturer's labels say "UV absorption up to 400nm." Fortunately, most sunglasses on the market meet this standard.

Large framed, wrap-around sunglasses offer the most protection because they are designed to block UV rays from almost all angles.



Source: [American Academy of Ophthalmology](http://www.aao.org) (www.aao.org)

# Sunscreen Tips

## What You Need to Know

In addition to seeking shade when possible and wearing sun-protective clothing, the use of sunscreen greatly helps in the prevention of sun damage.

The [American Academy of Dermatology](#) recommends these tips:

- Choose a sunscreen that has an **SPF of 30 or higher**, is water resistant, and provides broad-spectrum coverage, which means it protects you from UVA and UVB rays.
- Apply sunscreen generously before going outdoors. It takes approximately **15 minutes for the skin to absorb** the sunscreen and offer protection. If you wait until you are in the sun to apply sunscreen, your skin is unprotected and can burn.
- **Use enough sunscreen.** Apply as much sunscreen to fully cover all exposed areas. Rub the sunscreen thoroughly into the skin, until it is absorbed.
- **Reapply sunscreen at least every two hours** to remain protected, or immediately after swimming or excessively sweating.

Source: [American Academy of Dermatology](#) (www.aad.org)

Look for sunscreen  
with:

- SPF 30 or higher
- Broad Spectrum
- Water Resistant





# Sunscreen Tips

## Getting them ready

Your child's best sun protection are the lessons you teach them. Here are few tips to encourage effective sunscreen use at school.

Have your child practice putting on sunscreen at home with your supervision. Show them how to cover important areas such as their arms, legs, face, and ears.



Put your child's sunscreen and sunglasses in his or her lunch bag so they have it ready as they head to lunch and recess.

Use sunscreen sticks. Especially for younger children, these are easier to use by themselves.



Products like Sunburn Alert's wristband and stickers are helpful reminders of when it's time to reapply ([www.sunburnalert.com](http://www.sunburnalert.com)).



# Is Your Child's School Sun Safe?

## What You Need to Know



Now that your kids have the sun safety supplies they need, it's **critical to have a conversation with your child's school to make sure there are policies in place to provide sun safety** and to encourage your child to follow the sun safety steps you and your family practice.

Unfortunately, many school districts in the U.S. restrict the use of sunscreen. In a 2012 study, **only 44.4% of schools had a policy allowing students to apply sunscreen while at school.**

**38.3% of schools had a policy of scheduling outdoor activities to avoid the sun at peak intensity during the school day.**

Some schools that have a dress code may ban hats and/or sunglasses as well.

Source: [U.S. Surgeon General](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov) (www.surgeongeneral.gov)

# Is Your School Sun Safe?

## What Is School Policy?



Despite policies recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General, the CDC, the EPA and the American Academy of Dermatology, **many schools do not allow sunscreen without physician authorization**, and if sunscreen is permitted in school, it may be required to be kept in the nurse's office. This greatly impedes the availability for sunscreen to be applied in time for outdoor activities and field trips.

Learn about your child's school policy so that you can take steps to properly prepare them.



Source: [U.S. Surgeon General](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov) (www.surgeongeneral.gov)

# Is Your School Sun Safe? Checklist



## Protect your kids by asking about your school's policy

- When outdoor activities are scheduled, are there adequate shaded areas to reduce sun exposure?
- What is the school's sun safety policy?
  - May my child bring sunscreen to school?
  - Do educators remind kids to apply/reapply sunscreen at least 15 minutes before going outside?
  - If my child needs help applying sunscreen, are there school professionals that can offer assistance?
  - Are hats and sunglasses permitted when kids are outdoors?

## Proactive steps to increase school-time sun safety

- Discuss sun safety issues at PTA and community meetings
- Create posters to go up around the school to remind students to wear sunscreen, hats and sunglasses
- Parents and educators adopt sun safe behavior to teach students daily habits

# Shade Foundation and You



Two years ago, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a Call to Action to Prevent Skin Cancer, sounding the alarm that skin cancer is a major public health concern. A staggering 1 out of 5 Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. The *Journal of American Academy of Dermatologists* reports that melanoma is one of the most common types of cancer among adolescents and young adults.

The Shade Foundation of America exists to combat this trend and to equip children and families with the knowledge and materials to eradicate childhood melanoma. Please visit [www.ShadeFoundation.org](http://www.ShadeFoundation.org) to find more information and materials to protect yourself and your loved ones.